

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS

Originally designated the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers to serve Union volunteers from the Civil War, the first asylum opened in Togus Springs, Maine, in 1866 as the Eastern Branch. The next year, two more asylums opened, the Central Branch in Dayton, Ohio, and the Northwestern Branch in Wood, Wisconsin, near Milwaukee. Eventually other branches followed: the Southern Branch in Hampton, Virginia; the Western Branch at Leavenworth, Kansas; the Pacific Branch at Sawtelle, California, near Los Angeles; the Marion Branch at Marion, Indiana; the Danville Branch, at Danville, Illinois; the Mountain Branch at Johnson City, Tennessee; the Battle Mountain Sanitarium at Hot Springs, South Dakota; the Bath Branch at Bath, New York; the Roseburg Branch in Oregon; the St. Petersburg Home in St. Petersburg, Florida; the Biloxi Home in Biloxi, Mississippi; and the Tuskegee Home in Tuskegee, Alabama.

A record of veterans admitted to the homes as members is contained in “Historical Registers” that were maintained at the various branches. These registers are now found at the National Archives in RG 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs. A home number was assigned to each individual upon admission. The member retained his original number even if he was discharged and was later readmitted to the branch. Each page of the register is divided into four sections as follows: military history, domestic history, home history, and general remarks. The veteran’s military history gives the time and place of each enlistment, rank, company, regiment, time and place of discharge, reason for discharge, and nature of disabilities when admitted to the home. The domestic history provides information about

the veteran such as: birthplace, age, height, various physical features, religion, occupation, residence, marital status, and name and address of nearest relative. The home history provides the rate of pension, date or dates of admission, conditions of readmission, date of discharge, cause of discharge, date and cause of death, and place of burial. Entered under general remarks is information about papers relating to the veteran, such as admission papers, Army discharge certificate, and pension certificate. Information was also entered concerning money and personal effects if the member died while in residence at the branch.

The home registers have been reproduced as M1749, *Historical Registers of National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866–1938*. This microfilm publication is available at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, and many of the National Archives regional facilities. Some of the regional sites have all of the microfilm rolls covered under



Veterans in the dining hall of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Marion, Indiana, in the late 1890s. (Trevor K. Plante Collection)

M1749, while others maintain only the rolls for the soldiers' home that operated in their geographic region. For example, the NARA region in Waltham, Massachusetts, maintains microfilm rolls only relating to the Eastern Branch of the National Soldiers Home that operated in Togus, Maine. In addition to the historical registers some other records relating to soldiers homes have also been reproduced as part of M1749. The microfilm publication also contains registers of death for Bath and Roseburg; funeral records for Bath and Danville; and burial registers and hospital registers for Togus. Please note that the National Archives does not have Historical Registers for the St. Petersburg Home, the Biloxi Home, or the Tuskegee Home.

The regional archives maintain only a select number of member case files for the homes that operated in their regions. The majority of the original case files for individual members were disposed of decades ago.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 191–192.

Plante, Trevor K. "The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers," *Prologue*, Spring 2004, Vol. 36, No. 1.